

EARLY DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES

OF

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD 2

December 6, 2004

And

January 3, 2005

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: **2402787**

Address: **301 N.E. Northgate Way**

Applicant: **Tom Jones, KPFF for Simon Property Group**

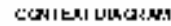
Board members present: **Albert Torrico**
 Jane Johnson
 Scheer Chan
 Jamie Fisher

Board members absent: **Karen Buschow**

Land Use Planner present: **Scott Kemp**

Early Design Guidance was offered at two meetings, December 6, 2004 and January 3, 2005, with the first limited to applicant presentation, Board questions and public comment and questions. The second meeting contained those three elements and Board deliberation to provide direction with regard to the design guidelines of highest priority.

Proposed is 105,000 sq. ft. of additional retail space along the west facade of the existing mall, a 8,200 sq. ft. restaurant building at the northwest corner of the site, a 10,000 sq. ft. retail or office building at the southeast corner of the site and a three story, four level, 600 space parking garage along N.E. 102nd south of the existing mall. Re-grading and reconfiguration of most of the parking areas west of the existing mall would take place. Creation of new exterior pedestrian promenades and walkways are proposed along the west side of the mall with connections to the northwest corner sidewalk, to First Ave. N.E. along the southernmost of the two existing driveways to that street, and to Fifth Ave. N.E. to the south. Within the reconfigured west parking areas several innovative drainage and water quality measures are planned to include drainage swales, and unit pavers.



1. Higher percentage of large and smaller percentage small parking spaces
2. Modification of Northgate Overlay requirement of a 10' wide, landscaped pedestrian walkway for every 250 parking space lot SMC 23.7 ---



PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Extensive public comment was received at both EDG public meetings and included those below.

The proposed parking garage should be designed to create a good transition in height, bulk and scale with surrounding streets and properties. Viewed from the south it would sit up eight to ten feet from the street grade and be seen in the forefront of the mall buildings. It would function to a large extent as a “gateway expression” of the mall as viewed from areas to the south which are expected to include two mixed-used residential developments, a County Transit Center, a City Park, a new street and a regional light rail station. The pedestrian zone along and past the garage needs to be highly developed. Including a wide sidewalk into the mall would be appropriate, as would including overhead weather protection, landscaping, artwork and other measures to create an attractive pedestrian path. The garage should be a good gateway element to the mall and a pedestrian amenity.

The pedestrian pathway plan needs to connect the Mall to the surrounding communities in all directions and also provide as much “safe haven” pathway from the parking lots into the mall as possible. While the plan to provide drainage swales in the eastern parking lots is good for many reasons, the shopper who parks in the lot and must then walk into the mall should not be ignored.

Specific Design Guidelines found in the City Wide and in the Northgate Urban Center Guidelines were identified by the public to be of high priority for this project.

1. A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. At the northwest corner there is a substantial grade change between the sidewalk and the mall parking lot. This presents a challenge to be overcome while placing a building there which has a sidewalk and street level presence. The design should create an attractive, usable pedestrian entry to the site from the sidewalk at the corner.
2. A-4 Human Activity. In addition to general direction to put human activities of new uses along street frontages, the Northgate specific guidelines address super block development which, in the proposed locations direct that there be a pedestrian friendly environment within the internal layout where commercial buildings are separated from the sidewalk by buildings and that every attempt be made to link to the greater community by creating lively, interesting pedestrian connections within the site, and also between the site and its surroundings. A simulation of the urban street grid on the super block was asked for.
3. A-8 Parking and Access. Minimize the number of curb cuts and width of driveways.
4. C-3 Human Scale (Architectural Materials and Elements). Exterior materials should include elements of human scale such as stone, brick and detailed finishing elements. Signage should be tastefully addressed and add to the architectural appearance of the site. There should be nothing comparable to “the world’s largest bull’s-eye.” There should be way finding elements around the site. Landscaping should be incorporated to break up the “sea of asphalt.”
5. A special site condition was identified in the form of portions of Thornton Creek close by to the southeast which should be protected and even responded to in the site planning and drainage

6. Vehicle maneuvering areas and drop off points for wheelchair lift equipped vehicles need to be designed into the areas where new pedestrian plazas are being created.

PRIORITIES:

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the siting and design guidance described below and identified by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's "*Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings*" and in the proposed "*Northgate Neighborhood Design Guidelines*" of highest priority to this project. The identification of priority guidelines and specific guidance was agreed to by all three of the Board members present at the second meeting, unless otherwise noted. While the notes below indicate the area the Board found most important, all of the Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings continue to have application

The Board generally agreed with and adopted the public comments outlined above. The great majority of these comments were from members of the Northgate Stakeholders Group, serving at the request of City Council and the Mayor to advise on the redevelopment matters within the Northgate Urban Center and particularly of the Simon controlled properties.

The Board then went on to discuss in detail several specific elements of the proposal. This approach was adopted by them because the site is so large and the proposed new development is proposed in differing regions of the mall.

Parking Garage

The façade treatment of the proposed garage should tie into that of the mall itself so that it appears as an attractive, related element of the mall (C-1, C-2). While bulk and scale are seen as an element to be controlled through architecture, the Board does recognize that the garage is a large building proposed on a very large site in a context of other large spaces and large buildings, both proposed and existing. The garage must not have blank walls. It should have a commercial appearance with elements of overhead weather protection along pedestrian paths beside it. It is essential that the pedestrian environment on all sides of the parking garage be highly developed in inviting and high quality ways. Materials, landscape, sidewalk widths and separation from the surrounding traffic, and weather protection are all important elements in creating the necessary pedestrian environment.

Corner Buildings

The two proposed corner buildings, one at the northwest corner of the site and one at the southeast corner, "...should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners." (A-10 Corner Lots)

These corner buildings also need to have a "face" to the mall. They have a role to play in making a connection between the mall site and the surrounding community. They need to be designed to

encourage pedestrian connections between surrounding areas and uses and the mall itself. The street side of each must not be a secondary frontage and should incorporate such features as store front glass walls, high quality base level materials and overhead weather protection. Each should be designed so that its entry is integrated with the pedestrian paths in the area, both across the site and along adjacent streets.

The two corner buildings need to present a strong edge along the street frontages. Urban forms, height, glazing, overhead weather protection durable, and high quality materials are among the architectural measures that should be incorporated.

The dumpsters and recycling for these two freestanding buildings need to be designed into them in an attractive and unobtrusive way.

Pedestrian Link to Southeast Corner

The Board sees a value in connecting the mall to the sidewalk at the southeast corner and the new building proposed there. They recognize there are some issues involved in creating a safe path, but, they think a solution acceptable to the Simon Company can be found and they are leaving the matter “on the table” for further design work by the applicants and future consideration by the Board.

Departures

The Board gave a preliminary indication that they favor the two requested departures, one for fewer that required small parking spaces and the other to replace landscaped pedestrian paths through the reconfigured and new parking areas with bio swales designed in cooperation with Seattle Public Utilities.

Further Direction

The applicants are asked to proceed to MUP application before returning to the Board. They are informed that the detail of the parking garage, the pedestrian facilities, the landscaping and the street improvements on First Ave. N.E. are of paramount importance and need to be fully developed prior to receiving a recommendation from the Board.

The applicant should imbed selected colored drawings into the front of the MUP plan set that show initial design responses to the propriety guidelines.